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OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

SOME GUIDELINES FOR LIAISON BRIEFINGS

1. For some years OCI has conducted current intelligence briefings as part of its foreign liaison program. By common consent of the recipients, these briefings have been and remain valuable. I believe they can be made even more useful, particularly by improving some of our methods and techniques. We can increase the benefits we derive from providing this service, which should be regarded as an important aspect of our work, and not as an onerous duty.

2. One of the attributes of the OCI briefings which our foreign colleagues most appreciate is their informal, conversational style, which permits questions, comments, and random insights to flow. The success of this approach, however, has perhaps obscured for us the elementary rule that a briefing is only as good as the preparation which precedes it. In order to increase the time in which analysts can prepare, we will in future give as much notice as possible that a briefing on a given topic is required. The briefing topics will be selected in consultation with Division Chiefs and the Foreign Liaison Officer, who is responsible for the administration of the briefing program. The liaison representatives are generalists possessing limited current command of most of the subjects we will present. From their point of view, the job of the briefer is to convey substance. On the other hand, analysts are aware that liaison representatives accredited to us are often exceptionally able and almost always widely experienced. They are usually quick to tell a concise presentation from a rambling discourse. For that reason also, advance preparation is fundamental.

3. Though our foreign colleagues are generalists, they are backstopped by area experts in their home capitals. This means that we should avoid didactic briefings. There is little interest in historical or chronological briefings, simply because the content is already well-known and digested [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Clearly, it is on occasion necessary to present some of the history of a situation in order to make current judgments intelligible.

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Nevertheless, our experience shows that the "up-date" approach is not helpful and is not well-received. It is often, in short, a waste of time.

4. Analytical briefings, on the other hand, are always well-received. The liaison representatives are at bottom primarily interested in what we think about events. One frequently hears them ask, "You have told us the facts about this situation, but what do you think it all means? Why are the Russians (Chinese/Indians/Mongolians, etc.) acting this way?" They want to know our opinions, hypotheses, and judgments. Analysts should be encouraged to offer their ideas and insights, however tentative or controversial these may be. It can be made clear that the view expressed is neither fully thought out nor endorsed as an Agency or community view if this be the case. What the analyst should do, in preparing his brief, is to ask himself the key questions relating to the implications of his story and either provide the answers or indicate the uncertainties. None of this, of course, is made easier by the continuing requirement to protect NOFORN material.

5. At these briefing sessions, the liaison representatives are industrious notetakers. Analysts will serve them best by making a conscious effort to maintain a moderate, even slow pace to allow them to keep up. Foreign words, names of persons, place names, and the like should be spelled, or better yet, served up by a simple visual aid or a handout sheet. The same applies with respect to statistical data and quantitative matter. More use can be made of visual aids in general than has been usual in the past. Maps should be provided when appropriate. Flip charts can be useful. Analysts may on occasion want to hand out an outline in advance of the presentation in order to help the liaison officers follow the argument. At the very least, the analyst should make quite clear at the beginning the main themes, topics, or proposition he or she proposes to develop. A fact to remember is that our briefings form the substance of despatches to several governments. The quality of these reports reflects not only on the work of the liaison officers but also on that of the Agency and its analysts.

6. Our preoccupation with the written word is a natural consequence of our mission and the media we employ. Still, we want to encourage OCI analysts to develop skill in the art of

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oral expression as well. Over the years a number of our officers have deservedly acquired substantial reputations in the Agency and elsewhere as able briefers. They have many opportunities to practice. Probably a majority of us, however, are not so favored. Our liaison briefing program is one regular forum in which our analysts can school themselves in the techniques of oral presentation.



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Acting Director of Current Intelligence

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